

## Looking for a way to help your high schooler graduate with college credit?

Concerned that your only options are decidedly secular? Would you like to introduce your student to college life while still within the safe environment of your own home? Already have community college credit and don't know where to go to have it accepted and continue your studies? Is the idea of sending your student off to a four-year institution beyond your financial means or their emotional strength? The answer to these concerns is in your very own backyard: Williamson Christian College. "Williamson Christian College is actively Christian in worldview and academically demanding. We desire to bring transformation to all we serve."

Williamson's new President, Stephen Higgins, and his wife, Paula, successfully homeschooled and graduated all four of their children. They understand the dilemmas that homeschooling families face when they attempt to make their student's high school years and college path the best that it can be. If you are looking for dual enrollment (high school and college credit) for your high school junior or senior, or if you're looking for a college for your soon-to-be-graduated student, then it's time to check us out.

We're offering two events to get your questions answered regarding what Williamson Christian College can do for you and your family: Thursday, January 28, 2010 / 7:00 – 8:30pm or Saturday, January 30, 2010 / 9:30am – 11:00am. Both meetings are being held at The People's Church, 828 Murfreesboro Road, Franklin 37064. You can visit our website at [www.williamsoncc.edu](http://www.williamsoncc.edu) and/or contact us by telephone at 615-771-7821.

# Vision for Home Schoolers

by Christina M. Danley, O.D.

When parents decide to homeschool their children, they often ask veteran homeschoolers about what curriculum to use, how to structure the day, and how to design a good record-keeping system. But all homeschool parents also need to ask another question: "How is my child's eyesight?"

Do you know as a parent how your child is focusing? Does your child have visual issues that you don't know about yet that need to be addressed? How can you assess your child and determine what is needed?

Human vision is perfectly designed for seeing far away. However, young people today spend hours peering into computer screens, reading, writing, and doing other work where good distance vision is no help. Reading, for instance, is a complex visual and cognitive task. Eyes have to hold close focus for long periods, aim inward, move fluidly from point to point on a line of type, and, at the same time, take in, decode, and take meaning from the letters on the page.

Weak visual skills show up as slow, halting reading, having to read a passage several times to understand it, skipping small words or lines, reading and re-reading the same line, having to sound out the same word repeatedly in a short passage, and taking hours to do a few minutes of homework. The most common problems found are insufficient focusing ability and convergence insufficiency, which is the poor ability to make and keep the eyes aiming inward when reading. These visual problems are also commonly found in young people with ADD or ADHD. Recent studies show convergence insufficiency is very common among children with ADD and ADHD. These children find near-vision work so difficult that they will avoid it at almost any cost.

Reduced visual skills require more de-

tailed testing than the usual medical eye exam provides. Most children with these problems pass the traditional "Snellen" wall chart screening with 20/20 or better. The problem only shows up during near-vision work. Proper diagnosis can be made by a developmental optometrist.

A developmental optometrist is an eye doctor who provides in-depth evaluation and treatment for developmental and functional vision problems. Common treatment for these vision problems includes prescription of stress-relieving lenses and/or neuro-optometric therapy, also known as vision therapy.

There are also several things that can be done at home to help facilitate good visual skills. Many children greatly benefit from a quiet reading space with a slanted desk top, chairs that are the right size, and plenty of light coming from shaded lamps on both sides of the reading material. Consider a timer to set reading breaks every 10 to 15 minutes. Have the child look up and away for a minute or two, or they can gently place their palms over eyes to warm and relax them. As an alternative, have the child place a book mark two pages ahead and then take a visual break when they reach it.

Adequate visual skills are an essential component of the learning process. The good news is that with the appropriate management, efficient visual skills can be developed. Children who once struggled with reading can begin to enjoy it, and children with attention problems can learn to focus.

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Dr. Danley is a developmental optometrist at The Center for Vision Development in Franklin, TN. Her office can be reached at (615) 791-5766 or by email at: [centerforvision@gmail.com](mailto:centerforvision@gmail.com).